other institutes, concretisation of pavements is the root cause behind tree deaths in Delhi;

(b) whether digging near the tree trunks, thereby cutting of the roots, is also the second major factor;

(c) if so, the reasons for such heavy tiling or stoning of pavements, especially when it is not used by pedestrians; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to protect the trees, which play a major role in bringing down the pollution level on the roads in Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The factors identified for the mortality of avenue trees include soil compaction, frost, engineering works, trenching of root zone and trunk rot etc.

(c) and (d) Stoning and tiling of pavements is done to provide a safe walking place for the pedestrians. While stoning of pavement is done, care is taken to leave sufficient breathing space for the trees. The steps taken to protect the trees are as follows:

(i) The 'Delhi Tree Preservation Act, 1994' has been enacted to check felling of green trees including prevention of damage to the trees.

(ii) Forest Department, Government of NCT of Delhi has established 'Tree help Line' to register complaints for redressal of the public grievances against offenders involved in tree offences.

(iii) A guideline has been issued to all concerned agencies to leave an open space of 6'x6' around the tree trunk for water recharge and saving the tree roots from damage. In case of any damage to the tree reported upon, action is initiated against the offedners as per law.

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has taken steps such as de-tiling 6'x6' area around the tree, reduction of width of pucca pavement to the extent of 4' to $4^{1}/_{2}$' in all future constructions, regular washing of trees to remove dust etc. and adoption of plant protection measures.

Forest Cover in A.P.

1110. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have assessed the present forest cover in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it has increased or decreased over the previous assessment, giving the details thereof; and

(d) the measures being taken to increase the forest cover in the State?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Forest Survey of India has been assessing the forest cover of the country biennially since 1987. As per the latest State of Forest Report, 1999, the forest cover of Andhra Pradesh is 44229 sq. km. which has shown an increase of 939 sq. km. over the previous assessment.

(d) Forest Conservation and Afforestation Programmes are undertaken by the State of Andhra Pradesh from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India under Centrally Sponsored Schemes. A World Bank aided Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management Project has been launched during 2002-2003 for the protection and conservation of forests.

Animals Sacrifice in Orissa

†1111. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government are aware that lacs of animals are sacrificed in various parts of the country, particularly in Orissa, on the occasion of Mata Puja, as reported in The Hindustan Times dated the 17th October, 2002;

(b) Whether it is an offence in Orissa but the State Government has failed to ensure compliance of law, by the people; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken to save the animals and to ensure stringent compliance of laws with regard to prevention of cruelty against animals, alongwith the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The Government is aware of the report in The Hindustan Times dated 17.10.2002. The Government of Orissa has reported that there is no incidence of indiscriminate animal sacrifice on the occasion of Mata Puja.

(b) and (c) The State Government have issued instructions to District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police to take appropriate steps for stoppage of alleged animal sacrifice. The provisions of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 are being strictly enforced.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.